

The origin of Xiangqi

The origin of Xiangqi has not been determined exactly yet, but it is believed that it was played since the third century BC, during the Warring States Period.

The earliest words record of the initial type of Xiangqi was appeared in the Northern Zhou Dynasty (AC. 557-581).

At that time, Xiangqi was called Xiangxi.

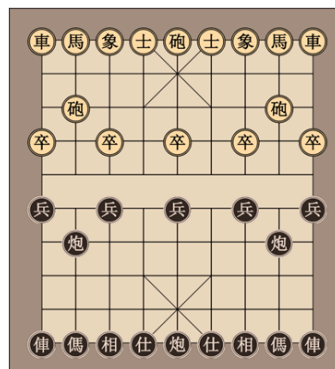
Then underwent hundreds years change, Xiangxi evolved to the Xiangqi and this word firstly appeared in Southern Song Dynasty (AC. 1127-1279).

Finally, in the end of Northern Song, the rule and appearance of Xiangqi had been very close to today.



This is a set of Xiangqi's pieces discovered in Inner Mongolia. It is believed made in Song Dynasty.

Picture source: Babelstone, 2008



象棋



The layout of board is 9 lines wide by 10 lines long. The pieces are played on the intersections.

The pieces are flat circular disks, each with a Chinese character on, sometimes engraved into the surface. The black pieces are marked with somewhat different characters from the corresponding red pieces.

The Various pieces

Piece	Point(s)
兵 卒 Soldier before crossing the river	1
兵 卒 Soldier after crossing the river	2
仕 士 Advisor	2
相 象 Elephant	1 - 2
偶 馬 Horse	4 - 5
炮 砲 Cannon	4 - 5
俥 車 Chariot	9

Different pieces have different value. Generally, Chariot is the most important. Meanwhile, the same piece will be valued different, when it is in different position. Like Soldier. So strategy is the most important.



Traditional Chinese Entertainment—Xiangqi

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How to play Xiangqi



The general may move and capture one point either vertically or horizontally, but not diagonally.



The advisors start to the sides of the general. They move and capture one point diagonally and may not leave the palace, which confines them to five points on the board. They serve to protect the general.



These pieces move and capture exactly two points diagonally and may not jump over intervening pieces.



A horse moves and captures one point vertically or horizontally and then one point diagonally away from its former position.



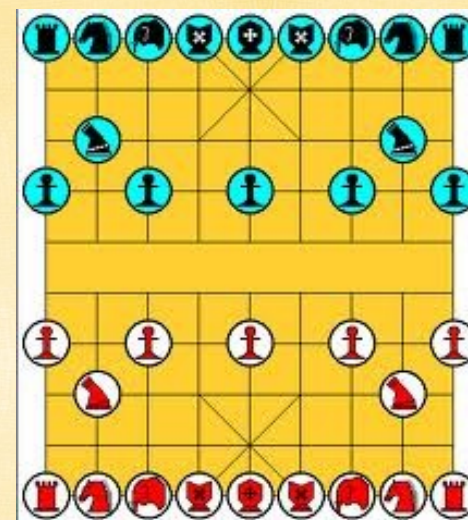
Cannons move like the chariots, horizontally and vertically, but capture by jumping exactly one piece (whether it is friendly or enemy) over to its target.



The chariot moves and captures vertically and horizontally any distance, and may not jump over intervening pieces.



The soldier moves and capture by advancing one point. Once they have crossed the river, they may also move (and capture) one point horizontally. Soldiers cannot move backward, and therefore cannot retreat; however, they may still move sideways at the enemy's edge.



The origin settlement of each pieces is like this. In each game, red side move firstly.

The game is over when the general of one side is captured, or both side lose too much pieces to capture opponent's general. If the second situation, this game is called dogfall



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